

IN RE INVESTIGATION OF AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON  
THE LOUISVILLE AND NASHVILLE RAILROAD AT SOUTH LOUIS-  
VILLE, KENTUCKY, ON FEBRUARY 11, 1921.

March 22, 1921.

On February 11, 1921, there was a side collision between a switch engine and a box car in the South Yard of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad at South Louisville, Ky., which resulted in the death of one employee. After investigation of this accident, the Chief of the Bureau of Safety reports as follows:

Location.

In the vicinity of the point of accident, the tracks extend north and south, there is a slight grade descending northward. The tracks involved were a yard track known as the "short main" and a siding leading off from the above track to the south and paralleling it on the east, known as the "run-around". The point of accident was at the clearance point of the convergence of these two tracks. The weather was clear.

Description.

The locomotive involved was No. 1008, a road engine, of the 2-8-0 type, equipped with foot boards and headlights on both front and rear ends for switching purposes. It was in charge of Engineman Carrico and Switching Foreman McFerron.

At about 3 o'clock on the morning of the accident, Foreman McFerron was instructed by the assistant yardmaster to proceed to the "run-around" track and switch out two cars for delivery to another yard. It was while engaged in this

movement, at about 3.15 a.m., that the accident occurred.

The engine, headed northward, proceeded to the "run-around" track, backing in from the north, coupling to 8 cars standing there, pulled out upon the "short main", shunted the rear car down on the "short main", shunted the next two cars back upon the "run-around" track, then another car upon the "short main" and was backing in on the "run-around" track with the remainder of the cars when the locomotive was cornered on its left side by the last car which had been shunted down the "short main", the forward right hand corner of the box car striking the fireman's side of the cab, just behind the window rest. The car and the engine were only very slightly damaged. The employee killed was the fireman of the switching engine.

#### Summary of evidence.

Fireman McFerron stated that before giving the engineman the signal to back upon the "run-around" track the second car which was shunted down the "short main" had cleared the switch frog by about half a car length and was standing still; however, he did not think it was back far enough to clear a man leaning out of the cab window on the fireman's side of the engine. After the engine started to back up, while he was opposite the clearance point of the switch, he looked across the car behind the engine and discovered the car so close to the frog that he thought it would not clear. He immediately gave a stop signal to the engineman, who applied the brakes, and although the engine afterward moved only a few feet, it did not come to a stop before

the collision occurred. He stated that he had been working in this yard about four years and he had never known of an instance where a car after coming to rest at this particular point had started and moved northward by gravity, and that it is not customary or necessary to ride or secure with hand brakes cars being switched at this point; he thought the track at this point was practically level. He further stated that at the time of the accident the weather was clear and that box cars could be seen a distance of 10 or 15 car-lengths.

Assistant Yardmaster Mills stated that in his opinion the car that collided with the engine started to move northward after coming to a stop by reason of a slightly descending grade at that point, and that it was a known fact to him and also generally known among the switchmen that a car at this point would move northward on account of the grade unless it was placed several car-lengths south of the frog.

The evidence indicates that both the locomotive and the car were moving very slowly at the time the accident occurred.

#### Conclusions.

This accident was caused by the failure of the switching crew to set the brakes on the car which had been shunted down the "short train", for which Yard Foreman McFerron is responsible.

According to his own statement, he permitted the engine

to back up on the "run-around" track when there was a doubt in his mind as to whether the last car placed on the "short main" would clear a man leaning from the fireman's side of the engine cab.

From the fact that there actually is a descending grade at this point, together with the statement of Assistant Yardmaster Mills, it would appear that Foreman McFerron must have known that there was an element of danger in such a movement, but rather than go to the trouble of having a brake set upon the car, took a chance that it would remain where it stopped.

All of the employees involved in this accident were experienced men and thoroughly familiar with the work in this part of the yard. None of the employees involved in this accident were on duty contrary to the provisions of the Hours of Service law.